



No Wonder

Iceland Hates Us!

by

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WHAT the wind-tunnel is to the aircraft designer, what the town model is to the traffic consultant, what the ore sample is to the mining engineer, the tiny nation of Iceland is to the student of Socialism.

The Marxist ideas which have taken many decades to gnaw into the vitals of the great Western nations have seized the once self-reliant descendants of the Vikings in acute form, and, in little more than a generation, have transformed many in a nation of heroes into spoiled, alcohol-bemused, welfare-worshipping, security-loving, responsibility-shirking people who excuse their utter refusal to do anything to help defend their country with the age-old refuge of the

coward; "It's no use resisting, I'm too little and weak."

Look at the Icelandic youth of today, who meekly allow American young men to defend them when danger threatens, but who bravely demand the immediate eviction of the "occupation army" when they think the danger is past! It is hard to believe that these are the kin of the roaring Vikings who defied the North Atlantic in open boats to discover our own country centuries before Columbus!

Few places on earth show more clearly than Iceland what happens to a people who abandon the civilization-building principles of enterprise, discipline and thrift to pursue the will-o-the-wisps of security, libertinism and extravagance. The

shocking contrast is still clearly visible between the oldest living generation of Icelanders, who helped build and maintain one of the most sensitively cultured nations in the world in spite of a hostile environment, and the hordes of young men who shop eagerly among the Communist and Socialist parties to see who will offer them the most for nothing.

To understand the enormity of the changes wrought in Iceland, mostly by Marxist ideas, it is helpful to look into Iceland's rugged past. We rightly hail our own Pilgrims for their hardihood in braving the New England weather and forests to settle Massachusetts. Imagine the kind of men it took, almost 800 years earlier, to settle on a barren volcanic rock, about the size of Indiana, at the edge of the Arctic Circle—a land almost entirely covered by eternal glaciers, practically denuded of trees by the 100-mile-an-hour gales which roar out of the North Atlantic during the winter, and with no natural wealth except the fish which abound in icy seas!

The only arable land is on the coastal fringes, and the growing season is pitifully short. To settle and exist on such a brutal environment takes real he-men (and real she-women) who neither make excuses nor quail before odds. But consider that, in addition to simply wresting an existence from this forbidding land, these incredible peo-

ple proceeded to build a literate and sensitive culture unequalled anywhere in the world! Every Iceland-er can read and write, and many of them are skilled painters or musicians or sculptors—or some combination of these. It is surprising to the foreigner to enter the rude hut of a fisherman's family, and find oil paintings adorning the walls—the work of the fisherman and his family!

Reykjavik, the capital, has a National Theater which puts on full-scale grand operas attended not by a small upper-class minority but by everybody. The examples could be endlessly multiplied, but it is sufficient to establish the point that a people with the intelligence and determination to build such an outstanding civilization under such utterly adverse conditions have what it takes to succeed as a nation. When they suddenly enter a sharp decline and head unmistakably for the international junk pile, we have an object lesson in the results of Socialism which only determinedly blind do-gooders could miss.

THAT Iceland is heading for the international junk heap is amply attested by the standard historical signs, observable in declining civilizations since Egypt, Greece and Rome. The most obvious symptom has already been mentioned—the outright refusal of the country to defend itself. As will be shown later, the Icelanders *do* have

the means and the ability to defend themselves successfully, and their refusal even to consider this on the grounds of their small size and inability to compete in modern technological warfare is sheer rationalization. If they had the will, the means would and could be found—but the thought of “Army” service so terrifies the undisciplined youth that it is political suicide for any Icelandic leader to suggest an army.

Another classic symptom of national decay is the loss of respect for law. There are several impractical and unenforceable laws (like our own Prohibition) which invite, almost compel, their violation. Chief among these is the tax law, which is flagrantly violated by all but the poverty-stricken and the prohibition of beer (although one can have a fine foaming glass in the home of many Icelandic officials). Also, from time to time, the sale of liquor or drinks in public places is forbidden, and then you will see bottles around the feet of merry-makers. In fact, one of the best attributes of an Icelandic girlfriend is her possession of a giant-sized pocketbook for secreting larger bottles.

THE MOST widespread symptom of all, however, is the general attitude of the people. Marxist thinking has so penetrated every intellectual nook and cranny of the land that the least Leftist party, the

Sjalfstaedthisflokkerin, translates its name as Independent (Conservative) Party—but promotes socialized medicine, government monopolies, and the entire line of programs usually found in Labor and Leftist governments. Starting from there, there are three more parties, each farther to the left until we come to the Communists, who constitute roughly 25 percent of the population.

It is a coalition of these Leftist parties which recently formed a cabinet containing Communists, and is now threatening to evict the United States defense forces from the giant airbase at Keflavik, thirty miles southwest of Reykjavik. Loss of this multi-million-dollar base would not only mean that we would lose a 3,000-mile headstart and warning station halfway along the direct Great Circle route between New York and Moscow, but that the Reds would gain even more in the other direction. In addition, we would have to disassemble and ship by sea the jets which we now send over for European defense by flying them in a few hours via Greenland and Iceland.

It will probably come as no bombshell of surprise to MERCURY readers that our own State Department plenipotentiaries had no small part in bringing about this miracle of subversion of a sturdy people. But it is less certain that many will so readily understand the equally stellar role played by some of our

military leaders in the tragedy.

When the Icelanders invited the United States to re-garrison the airfield at Keflavik (U.S.-built in World War II) under the NATO agreements, we poured millions and millions of dollars into the project, including many grandiose permanent buildings. One would imagine that after such a large investment we would do everything possible to keep the Icelanders happy with the situation. It was advantageous to us, and, under the agreement, they could evict us at will. And yet, we sent to Iceland, as our representatives, some of the shoddiest people imaginable.

One naval officer was fresh from a conviction by a general court martial for irregular conduct and gave little evidence of remorse at his chastisement.

It is a known fact that many of the United States military officials in Iceland have been guilty of conduct not only unbecoming to an officer and a gentleman, but to any American. For example, one of the senior officers attached an Icelandic divorcee, whom he entertained in his quarters at odd hours, and drove around in his private "U.S. Navy" vehicle.

There was the fellow who picked out a very lovely Icelandic girl from a fine family and openly announced their engagement. Then he left Iceland for the U.S. in a tearful farewell, promising to get a divorce (a necessary detail since he was mar-

ried), and no more was heard from this leader of men. This case is still ricocheting from the State Department to the Army JAG office, and the Icelandic Ambassador in Washington, because it turned out that the girl was pregnant.

THE U.S. radio station at Keflavik is powerful enough to reach half the population of Iceland—which half lives in Reykjavik—and was operating a good many hours when the only Icelandic station was off the air. As a result, we had a golden opportunity to win enormous goodwill with the Icelanders by putting on programs which would not only give our troops background on their host country, but which would also please the local citizenry.

Several efforts to do something like this met with no success at all. Instead, station TFK broadcast programs of be-bop which, it was indicated, the troops demanded, but which thoroughly offended many of the sensitive and cultured Icelanders. An Icelandic father who found his daughter listening enraptured to something like "Slopping Around In The Sewer" would not be likely to develop kindly feelings toward Americans.

In view of the uniform and predictable pinkness of the U.S. State Department, it may seem superfluous to catalogue the un-American operations of our diplomatic

representatives, but there may be some Americans who don't realize the open and widespread extent of this attitude. During two years of attending diplomatic parties in Reykjavik, and becoming genuine friends with some of the officers of the American Legation who were personally quite charming, this observer found it more and more difficult to understand how we are able to maintain a serious posture of anti-Communism anywhere in the world.

The open alliance with Socialism and the fanatical defense of unmasked Communists in America were so obvious that no Icelander could imagine other than that we are Socialists and Communists in everything but name. One political officer of the American Legation repeatedly tried to get me to read Left-wing periodicals to learn the "truth." This individual rose in wrath at the suggestion that there were or had been any Communists in our State Department. The books in his "library" were all that McCarthy said they were, and this form of anti-Americanism is too well known to merit comment—but the publicly-expressed remarks of this contentious man at diplomatic parties were so violent and vindictive that he sometimes laid hands on guests who were not as receptive to his Red-tinged tirades as he demanded. On several occasions he was removed from the premises by his own embarrassed

cohorts. His wife was equally filled with a passion for "social progress," and, almost as often as he, was equally filled with burning spirits of the bottle.

The statement that our other diplomatic representatives often removed the Press Officer at parties might indicate that they enjoyed a degree of sobriety, but the truth is they appeared sober only by contrast. To be a really outstanding drunk in the American diplomatic set in Reykjavik took very special talent and efforts, because, with the exception of the very top senior officers, many members of the Legation drank heavily, and many were as besotted as is possible. To a man—and woman—they did everything in their power to support the idea common among Europeans that McCarthy was the veritable reincarnation of Hitler, and that the American people lived in terror of his ascension to armed dictatorship.

IN SUM, a large segment of our diplomatic and military leadership fostered the overall impression that America is a land of uncultured, jazzy barbarians, terrorized by "witch-hunters" but full of honest zeal for Socialism and better things which are being denied them by a tiny band of fanatical and diehard reactionaries.

The inevitable result is a natural native suspicion and dislike of this vulgar horde of Americans in the midst of such a tiny nation. Even

the most pro-American Icelanders betray an understandable aversion to such a large body of foreign troops in their midst. There are only about 144,000 of them, and the concentration in one place of many thousands of our troops constitutes a very real irritation, especially when the concentration is rich, disrupts the economy, pays little attention to the sensitive culture of the hosts, and is often led by wretched and boorish men.

Consequently, and again understandably, the cry "Ami, go home!" is very helpful to an Icelandic politician wishing to be elected. This largely explains what is going on there now. Actually, there is no real chance that the U.S. will be evicted from Iceland—lock, stock and barrel—because the Icelanders have built an inflated standard of living on U.S. construction dollars, and loss of U.S. spending would result in economic chaos. Thus, most of the fuss is unadulterated demagoguery. But there is always the chance, of course, that an inflamed public will get out of hand. This has been guarded against, however, and the officers being sent to Iceland now are hand-picked with the probable job of reverting to the "civilian technicians" who were at the airport before the present defense force came in.

WHAT would be best for both Iceland and the U.S.—but what is presently improbable be-

cause of the spoiled nature of the populace—would be a part-time, U.S.-trained, U.S.-equipped, native National Guard. This was what was meant earlier by the statement that Iceland *can* defend itself, and it isn't even necessary to have an army to do it.

Iceland is hundreds of miles away from the nearest conceivable place from which the kind of triphibious invasion necessary to capture it could be started, and all such near places are under observation. In addition, even with only small opposition, it is necessary to spend some time softening up the few landing beaches or drop areas so that, barring total hydrogen bomb warfare, Russia cannot land on Iceland without giving at least one day's notice. That is all the time necessary for a National Guard to hold the fort, because in one day the NATO forces of Britain, Norway and even U.S. air and carrier forces will be present to drive off any invaders. The Icelandic economy would benefit from the landing fees for transient U.S. jets, and the construction dollars it is presently getting.

But what is enormously more important, this little jewel of a nation, this testimonial to courage and initiative and hard work, would be filled with the incalculable spiritual lift of self-reliance—the fierce pride of the tiny sparrow driving the hawk from its nest.

THE LITTLE LAND of Iceland, home of the oldest parliament in the world, one of the newest among free nations, having only recently won independence from Denmark, home-land of my wife and children, and the land I love best after my own (although some of my Icelandic relatives will probably doubt this after reading this article), is on the historic road to loss of what it loves and cherishes the most—its freedom and sovereignty.

There *are* great men in Iceland—strong, brave men who are capable of leading the people out of the soggy mess of Socialism in which they are foundering. One of them, seeing there was almost nothing for the young folks in Reykjavik to do, proposed first a skating rink, then a bowling alley, but in each case he was frustrated by the controls and taxes imposed

by the greedy Socialistic government. As a result, there is still nothing much for the young folks to do except drink and “party”—and there is no opportunity for pin-boys, bowling-equipment shops, etc., and there are no tax returns from alleys or rinks which do not exist.

If brave and capable leaders were allowed to operate in a *free* economy, Iceland soon would have little need for much outside help. The people are sturdy and bright, and there is no limit to the prosperity which their natural inventiveness and industry could attain. Their forefathers challenged the impossible in crossing the stormy North Atlantic in open boats—and the same healthy blood which is still coursing in young Icelandic veins *can* perform the spiritual and economic miracle which the country needs.

Historians of the future will marvel most of all at the non-resistance of those who had the most to lose.

GENERAL GEORGE VAN HORN MOSELEY
(Commenting on the decline of the
Republic of the United States)